

Newspaper recognizes foster family with Excalibur Award

David and Christine McCarty of Rockford were honored this past winter with the Excalibur Award, given by the Rockford Register Star. Following is an excerpt of the news article from the paper written by Christine Byers.

...The couple took the stage to accept the crystal Steuben eagle, which symbolizes the courage and commitment to excellence that Excalibur winners demonstrate. Christine began their acceptance speech by saying David, 69, usually does the difficult things, like public speaking, before she handed the award to her husband.

"This man works 14 to 16 hours a day and comes home with a smile on his face, until he finds out what happened at home that day," Christine, 59, said, giggling through her tears and looking at David. "He's always been generous with himself. This is for you."

David treated cocaine babies, and sexually and physically abused and malnourished children as an orthopedic surgeon in Rockford and as a volunteer physician for the Illinois Crippled Children's

Clinic. It was David's idea to take in foster kids after his wife left her nursing job.

Their foster children have had special needs, have been infants awaiting adoption, unwed mothers, and the abused.

"This has been a very humbling experience," David said. "There's been up periods and down periods."

David has donated time as a doctor for the Winnebago County Health Department and on trips to Vietnam in 1996 and 1997. Christine is an On the Waterfront committee member, past chairwoman of United Cerebral Palsy telethon, former board member at New American Theater and a 1996 recipient of the "Spirit of Caring" award from Crusader Clinic.

David still provides free medical exams for Harlem High School athletes. He was moved to tears and paused before he spoke when his wife handed him the award.



The Rockford Register Star honored David and Christine McCarthy for their commitment to serving children. They have been foster parents to children with many needs and of many ages. In addition to parenting Alex, their teenage son by adoption, and six adult children, the couple makes time to volunteer for many health-related causes.

"It's like they're your own kids, and they're ours until they go to be with another family," David said.

The couple has six adult children—David, Amy, Susan, Michael, Melina and Steven—and a teenage son, Alex; the McCartys adopted Steven and Alex, who lived with the family first as foster kids.

"Our own kids have learned how to love, care and give from this," David said. "And that's what this is all about."

Foster parent snap shots



Marilyn Kent

Marilyn Kent, of Garden Prairie, has been a licensed foster parent for about

15 years. She accepts school age children who demonstrate very challenging behaviors. Marilyn provides the children with structure and nurturing, and actively participates in their System of Care staffings. She remains committed to them until a permanency plan is achieved.

Bertha and Charles Wooding

Bertha and Charles Wooding

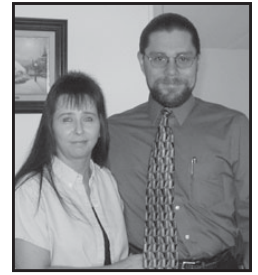
have been licensed for several years. They foster troubled adolescent boys, many coming to the Woodings after multiple placements. Many of the youth placements have had criminal issues. The Woodings are committed to helping them work toward independence.



Julie and Louis Lorenz

Julie and Louis Lorenz have been licensed for

one year. In that short time they have accepted several teen boys to their home. They've learned to cope with difficult behaviors and provide stability. The Lorenzes participate in the staffings for the boys in their home, advocate for their needs, and encourage the boys to engage in healthy activities.



Illinois Mentor opens new Rockford Area office for foster care

January 2004 brought a new foster care agency to the Rockford area. Illinois Mentor opened an office at 7115 Windsor Lake Parkway, Suite 170 in Loves Park.

Illinois Mentor, Inc., a member of the Mentor Network, was founded on the principle that individuals with special needs should receive services and support in their own communities, regardless of the complexity of their medical conditions, severity of their development disability, or the challenges of their behavior. Services for the individuals are provided largely through contracts with state agencies, such as

DCFS and the Illinois Department of Human Services.

The Mentor Network was founded and has been based in Boston since 1980. Mentor has offices throughout the country and provides a variety of behavioral health and human service needs. Illinois Mentor has over a decade of history in public sector service provision. It began as an institutional alternative for juveniles and has evolved to offer innovative services in areas such as care for children with medically complex needs. For more information, contact Illinois Mentor at 815-282-6153.

Northern News

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Call with foster parent association news and schedules; local training; features on foster families and community members working for children; photos; and news articles and support all foster families can use.

Walking the walk raises awareness for foster care and adoption



Foster and adoptive parents, DCFS and private agency staff, elected officials and members of the community, came together for the 14th Annual Walk-a-thon on May 1. The event was hosted by the Rockford Field Office. The walk has for years been a well-attended event that draws media attention.

Walkers traveled more than a mile starting at the Field Office and ending at the State of Illinois Building on Wyman. At the finish, the participants enjoyed food, fun, and activities for everyone. With just the small risk of sore feet and pulled muscles, the heightened attention helped the message about foster care to be heard loud and clear.

Kankakee office holds thank you event

On Saturday, May 1, the faces of DCFS foster families lit up with surprise at the outpouring of good wishes from the DCFS staff who support them. The theme for the banquet was "You Light Up My Life."

A committee made up of the DCP Supervisor Eric Smith and foster parent Annie Jackson worked on decorations. DCP Clerical, Jill Offerman and Marla Abdallah of

Resources, sent donation request letters out for our door prizes for the raffle. Donna Vandermark helped develop the program.

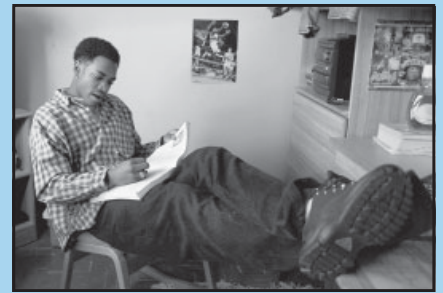
Music, food and the fun of a staff versus foster parent trivia contest kept the event lively. With appreciation certificates to all active foster parents, both staff and families went home refreshed.

Rockford office honors 250 foster parents

The Rockford Field Office foster parent appreciation banquet honored more than 250 foster parents. They were joined by professionals from the judicial system and child welfare agencies. Even foster youth received awards. Pictured: Kathy Reese, Associate Director, LSSI; Douglas Kaufman, Juvenile Court Judge; Patrick Heaslip, Overall Youth Award Winner; and Joe Becerra, Regional Administrator.



Adoptive Families Today offers academic scholarships for regional youth



To qualify for these regional scholarships, the student must:

- Reside in Cook, Lake, Kane, McHenry or DuPage Counties
- Be a graduating high school student or GED Recipient.
- Have a GPA of 2.0 or above.
- Demonstrate leadership in one or more of these areas: academics, student government, athletics, high school organizations and clubs, community service, and employment.

Applications must be submitted between **May 1 and June 30, 2004.**

To receive an application call: 847-382-0858 and leave your name, address, and phone number.

Northern Region Training Calendar

FosterPRIDE In-Service Training

All licensed foster parents and adoptive parents are welcome to attend any or all of the PRIDE In-Service Trainings to enhance their skills and meet yearly training requirements.

Module 1 - *The Foundation for Meeting the Developmental Needs of Children* (Four 3-hour sessions = 12 training hours)

Module 2 - *Using Discipline to Protect and Nurture* (Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 3 - *Child Development* - New module being written

Module 4 - *Child Sexual Development and Sexual Abuse* (Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours)

Module 5 - *Supporting Relationships Between Children and Their Families* (Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 6 - *Working as a Professional Team Member* (Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 7 - *Promoting Children's Personal & Cultural Identity* (Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours)

Module 8 - *Promoting Permanency Outcomes* (Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 9 - *Managing the Fostering Experience* (Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours)

Module 10 - *Understanding the Effects of Chemical Dependency on Children & Families* (Five 3-hour sessions = 15 training hours)

College of DuPage Area
630-942-2392

Module

KANKAKEE - Lee's Inn

June 22 (Tue) & 6:30-9:30 p.m. 4
June 26 (Sat) 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Rock Valley Area
815-921-2301, ext. 2305

Module

Please call the number listed above for upcoming training dates.

Educational Advocacy

Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hrs.

It is mandatory for one foster parent in each family to attend Educational Advocacy Training in order to be re-licensed. Educational Advocacy Training is offered following each Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE training and many additional times. This six hour course covers information foster parents need to know so that they can advocate for their foster children's educational rights and needs.

College of DuPage Area
630-942-2392

AURORA **Comfort Suites**
June 12 (Sat) 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

ELGIN **Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites**
June 26 (Sat) 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

GLEN ELLYN **College of DuPage**
June 26 (Sat) 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

ROMEOVILLE/JOLIET **Country Inn & Suites**
June 5 (Sat) 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

WAUKEGAN **Ramada Inn**
June 19 (Sat) 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
July 24 (Sat) 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Rock Valley Area
815-921-2301, ext. 2305

DIXON **Loveland Community Ctr.**
June 22 & 29 (Tue) 6-9 p.m.

ROCKFORD **Stenstrom Center/RVC**
June 19 & 26 (Sat) 1-4 p.m.

Do you have news from your foster parent group?

Is there a Northern Region event coming up?

Do you know a Northern Region family to highlight?

Illinois Families Now and Forever wants to hear from you. Contact the regional reporter listed on page two.

